

TRANSITION UPDATE

Hall County Department Of Corrections

NOVEMBER, 2006

Volume 1, Issue 3

OFFICER OF THE MONTH

Much of this newsletter is about the physical plant of the new jail and how it will function as a Direct Supervision facility, but in reality the most important part of any jail is not the physical plant, but the people that work in it.

The voters of Hall County passed the Bond Issue not because they wanted the inmates to have a nice place to live, or because they wanted to pay more taxes for a new building as a source of community pride. I believe they voted to support the bond issue because of the issue of Officer safety. Our priority listed in the Mission Statement is to provide for the safety of the community and

the community recognized this dedication.

In recognition of the importance of the Officers that come to work each day and do the job we will be taking nominations for Officer of the Month each month.

In the nomination for Officer of the Month for November this Officer was described as dedicated, hard-working, motivated and dependable. The nomination further said that he is always willing to help out his fellow Officers in any situation and shows great professionalism in all his dealings. The nomination also said that this Officer follows orders, but also shows great initiative. The



Officer of the Month for November is Corrections Officer William Young. Officer Young joined the Department on May 2, 2005. Continue the good job Officer Young.

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REMEMBER TO
PARTICIPATE IN
THE PROCESS

BUILDING NEWS

It is difficult to see from the highway, but the concrete footings have been poured at the building site. If you look over from the highway you can see a long line of pink-topped stakes growing out of the ground. These stakes are the outline for

our new facility. We haven't actually walked the footings yet, but from the pictures we have taken they seem to go a long ways.

The contractual completion date is December, 2007. While

that may sound like a long time in the future it is coming more quickly than you may realize.

VOTE NOVEMBER 7

IPC—REVIEW OF THE BASICS

You have had the chance to learn the four basic skills you need to size up a situation—to manage your job and the inmates more effectively. These skills build on each other so we will review them before we move on.

Positioning means putting yourself in the best possible place to see and hear individuals or groups. Being in a good position will help you prevent problems from escalating.

Posturing, how you carry yourself, tells

an inmate a lot. Using good posture indicates strength, confidence, interest and control.

Observing is the ability to notice and understand inmate appearances, behavior and environment. Careful observation of the inmates will tell you a lot of what you need to know about the inmates.

The final basic skill is listening. Listening helps you hear the danger signals from inmates while things are at the verbal stage before they have escalated out of control.

Once you choose to communicate with an inmate or a group of inmates you begin by putting all of the basic skills to use. As the communication process develops you will use the add-on skills.



IPC THE ADD-ONS

Add-on skills help you open up communication with inmates. They provide you with the ability to get another person to tell you more about what he knows or thinks. You will find the add-on communicating skills important whenever you need to get more information about a situation or to address an inmate's concerns.

The better your understand an inmate, the more effective you can be in terms of

inmate management. You can add to your understanding and action in ways that will help you defuse tension, decrease the chances of trouble and increase your ability to handle any and all situations more effectively.

The basic skills let you size up the situation. The add-on skills will help you to understand the full implications of the situation and act constructively.

What qualities or skills do good communicators have that make them effective?

ADD-ONS RESPONDING TO INMATES

Responding means just that—showing a clear reaction to something you have seen or heard. A response gives evidence that you have listened.

The first level of responding is identifying content. To identify the content think about what is said and then reflect it



“you’re saying, it looks like or you look”

back to the inmate by using the phrases “you’re saying, it looks like, or you look”. Such responses will give the inmate the opportunity to talk it out rather than act out in anger.

The second level of responding is identifying the feeling. To identify the feeling you

position and posture yourself, then observe and listen. Then you think about the feeling (happy, angry, sad, scared) and its intensity (high, medium or low). Finally you respond by reflecting back “you feel_____”. If the inmate clams up after you identify his feelings, he is probably

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ADD-ONS ASKING QUESTIONS

You ask questions in order to get useful answers. The skill of asking questions will help you increase your information and your ability to manage inmates. There are three basic steps involved in asking relevant questions.

You first must develop one or more questions of the who, what, where, when, why and how type. Some questions you might use are: where were you, who were you with, or why were you there?

The second step is thinking about what

was said or not said. In thinking about the inmates answer you can consider four things—how the inmate looks as he answers; what he is doing as he answers; what he has actually said; and what he may have failed to say. By thinking on these four areas of concern, you can make sure that you fully understand all the implications of the inmate's answers.

The third step is responding to the answers. Responding means reflecting back to the inmate what he has said in terms of content, feeling and/or meaning. Respond-

ing opens up the inmate and gives you a chance to make sure you understand what is being said.

We have now covered the basics and the add-ons, these skills will help you begin meaningful communication to improve your management skills. Beginning next month we will cover the applications to really begin controlling the situation.

DIRECT SUPERVISION—POD OFFICER SKILLS

The National Institute of Corrections has identified six officer skills needed to supervise a direct supervision pod. Over the next several months we will be covering those skills.

The first of these skills is leadership. The Pod Officer plays a leadership role and is in charge of the pod. This means that the Officer manages the operation of the pod, manages the behavior in the unit, serves as

the role model for the desired behavior, finds ways to reward good behavior, identifies and solves problems, holds inmates accountable and responsible for unit goals and individual behavior and stress

stresses psychological controls over physical controls and verbal skills over force and discipline as primary management skills.

The direct supervision Officer plays a leadership role and is in charge of the unit.

WELCOME

On October 30, 2006 Sgt Chuck Wagner started training two new Corrections Officers. If you haven't met Jason Truell or Thomas Dibern yet say hello when you see them.

Along with numerous changes of shifts and days off



NEWS/IN TRANSITION

several Officers have changed duties. Cpl John Fosket is now supervising an outside inmate work crew. Correction Officers Tracy Atwood, Terry Manolidis and Amy Norton are now Court Officers and Mandy

Handenfeldt now divides her time between Court duty and assisting in the Administrative Offices.

Corrections Officer Bill Young will shortly be training to be a PPCT instructor. Corrections Officer Justin Richardson will be joining the Transition Team—keep your typing fingers limber Justin we have stacks of new Policy & Procedure for you to do.



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Corrections

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On November 15, 2005 the voters of Hall County voted in favor of a bond issue to build a new County Corrections Facility. Anyone that has worked in our present Facility with its blind corners, bad plumbing and outdated system views this as a positive improvement.

As citizens of the largest democracy in the world it is our responsibility to educate ourselves on the issues and vote on November 7, 2006. We owe this to ourselves and future generations. PLEASE REMEMBER TO VOTE!!!

CONTINUED FROM ADD-ONS RESPONDING TO INMATES

going to act on them; on the other hand, if he continues to talk, he is telling you he wants to talk it out instead of acting on it.

The third level of responding is identifying meaning. This requires you to paraphrase the content of an inmate's statement in such a way as to provide a meaningful reason for the inmate's feeling.

Learning how to identify content and how to identify feeling has prepared you to identify meaning. Now your response at this new level can put everything together. For example, an inmate in danger of being pulled into a fight when their record is clean might feel "scared" because "the fight could blow my chances to get out early". The personal meaning of the potential fight for this inmate is that it might prevent them from earning good time and might result in a longer sentence.

An Officer being there and knowing how to initiate communication with an inmate in a tense situation could respond effectively to de-escalate the situation before it was out of control. Keeping an inmate talking during a difficult situation can mean the difference between effective management and real danger.

When you feel the inmate has said all they are going to say, or when you know all you need to know, then you can take action, but be careful about giving advice too soon. A lot of times an inmate will hold back part of the problem until he sees how you react. If you tell him what to do too early, it may not be good advice.

